

REMARKS

A total of 30 claims remain in the present application. The following remarks/arguments are presented in response to the Office Action mailed January 11, 2007, wherefore reconsideration of this application is requested.

Referring now to the text of the Office Action:

- claims 2-8, 10-15, 19 and 23-35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as being unpatentable over the teaching of United States Patent No. 5,884,270 (Walker et al); and
- claims 20-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over the teaching of Walker et al in view of United States Patent Application No. 2002/0085701 (Parsons).

The Examiners various claim rejections are believed to be traversed in view of the following discussion.

United States Patent No. 5, 884,270 (Walker et al) teaches a system and methods which enable various parties (identified as “parties” and “requesters” by Walker) to anonymously exchange information. According to Walker et al, the system 100 comprises party terminals 300 and requester terminals 400, which are linked to a central controller 200, via a network 110, which enables anonymous data exchange and communications between parties and requesters. More particularly:

“Party terminal 300 provides a party with an interface to system 100. Preferably, party terminal 300 allows a party to enter party data and transmits it to central controller 200 via network 110. Party terminal 300 also allows a party to indicate which of the entered party data system 100 is authorized to release to a requestor, view requestor data, and communicate anonymously with the requestor at requestor terminal 400. The structure of party terminal 300 is described in greater detail in connection with FIG. 3.

Requestor terminal 400 provides a requestor with an interface to system 100. In a preferred embodiment, requestor terminal 400 allows a requestor to enter requestor data and transmits the requestor data to central controller 200 via network 110. Requestor terminal 400 also allows a requestor to enter search criteria about parties of interest, to indicate which of the entered requestor data system 100 is authorized to release to a particular party, view party data, and communicate with parties at party terminals 300. The structure of requestor terminal 400 is described in greater detail in connection with FIG. 4.' [col. 7, lines 33-52]

Thus, parties and requesters use terminals 300, 400 to enter part data and requester data, respectively, which is then transmitted to the central controller 200 via network 110.

Central controller 200 controls the flow of data to and from party terminals 300 and requestor terminal 400. Preferably, central controller 200 stores and authenticates the authorship of "party data" and "requestor data" received from party terminals 300 and requestor terminal 400, respectively. "Party data" comprises data about or corresponding to a respective party. "Requestor data" comprises data about or corresponding to the requestor..." [col 6, lines 60-67]

In addition, central controller 200 controls the release of requestor data and party data that the requestor and respective parties, respectively, have authorized for release. Central controller 200 also establishes a communications channel between party terminals 300 and requestor terminal 400, while maintaining the anonymity of the parties using party terminals 300 and the requestor using requestor terminal 400. The structure of controller 200 is described in greater detail below in connection with FIG. 2A. [col 7, lines 23-31]

Also, CPU 205 preferably assigns pseudonyms to each party and requestor, and stores the pseudonyms in databases 255 and 260, respectively. The pseudonyms can include coded identifiers, web page addresses, bulletin board addresses, pager numbers, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, voice mail addresses, facsimile telephone numbers, and postal mail addresses. [col 8, lines 44-50]

The person of ordinary skill in the art will instantly recognise that Walker et al do not teach or suggest any of the elements of the present invention. In particular:

- Walker et al do not teach or fairly suggest that a team member may define a plurality of member profiles, as provided by claim 35. While Walker's party data and requester data could be referred to as party profiles and requester profiles, there is nothing in the teaching of Walker et al that suggests that a party (or requester) may have multiple different profiles.
- Walker et al do not teach or fairly suggest that different profiles relate to respective different communications preferences of each party (or requester). In fact, Walker et al. do not mention communications preferences at all, much less that parties/requesters might define different profiles for respective different sets of communications preferences, as provided by claim 35. In this respect, the Examiner's argument: "(see col 9, line 26-61; the central controller assigns pseudonyms to each party and requester that indicates a party's and requesters preferences for participating in different types of communications" is utterly unfounded. The cited passage does not mention or refer to pseudonyms, and "party's and requesters preferences for participating in different types of communications" is not mentioned anywhere in the Walker et al patent. Furthermore, there is no apparent relationship between the assignment of a pseudonym (for what ever purpose) by the central controller and the claimed feature of enabling a team member to "define a plurality of member profiles associated with the team member, each member profile ... comprising communications information defining a respective set of preferences of the team member for participating in each one of a plurality of different types of communications"
- Since Walker et al do not teach or fairly suggest multiple member profiles, it is axiomatic that Walker et al do not teach or fairly suggest a user interface (party terminal or requester terminal) that enables the user to "select one the plurality of member profiles as a current profile". In this respect, the Examiner's argument

that “see col. 7, line 49-col. 8, line 41 central controller selects pseudonyms based on user preferences”, and the alleged connection between this assertion and the claimed limitation of enabling a team member to select one of the plurality of member profiles as a current profile, are entirely unsupported. The term “pseudonym” does not appear anywhere in the passage cited by the Examiner. Walker does teach (at col 8, lines 44-50) that the CPU 205 assigns pseudonyms, but there is nothing in this teaching that implies that the assigned pseudonym might in any way be related to “user preferences”, much less that the “central controller selects pseudonyms based on user preferences” as asserted by the Examiner. Furthermore, selection of a pseudonym by a central controller, and enabling a user to select one of a plurality of profiles as a currently profile, are so obviously and dramatically different functions that it is impossible to rationally assert that there is any equivalence between them.

- Since Walker et al do not mention communications preferences; definition of different member profiles for respective different sets of communications preferences; or selection of one of the plurality of member profiles as a current member profile, it follows that Walker et al cannot possibly teach or suggest sending the communications information of the selected current profile to a second user, as alleged by the Examiner. The fact that Walker’s central controller 200 is capable of sending authorised portions of a party’s data to a requester independently of whether or not the involved party is logged into the system is irrelevant, since none of the other elements of the claimed feature are present in the Walker et al patent.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that United States Patent No. 5,884,270 (Walker et al) fails to teach or fairly suggest any of the features of the presently claimed invention. United States Patent Application No. 2002/0085701 (Parsons) does not provide the missing teaching. More particularly, while Parsons uses a worker’s current “presence context” to determine how an incoming call should be handled, Parsons does not teach or fairly suggest that each worker has a plurality of profiles, as required by claim 35. Nor does Parsons teach or

fairly suggest that the team member defines each of their profiles by interaction with a persistent collaboration services suite.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the presently claimed invention is clearly distinguishable over the teaching of the cited references, taken alone or in any combination. Thus it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance, and early action in that respect is courteously solicited.

If any extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is required to obtain entry of this response, such extension is hereby respectfully requested. If there are any fees due under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 which are not enclosed herewith, including any fees required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 19-5113.

Respectfully submitted,

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